



South Carolina Department of Health
and Environmental Control

INFORMATION SHEET LAKE CONESTEE SITE GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

I. Public Meeting

A **public meeting** will be held on Tuesday, **January 27, 2004**, in the Fellowship Hall of the Victory Chapel Baptist Church. The church is located at 9 South Pinelake Circle in the Conestee area of Greenville County, South Carolina. The meeting will begin at **6:30 p.m.** The purpose of this meeting will be to update citizens on the actions being taken at Lake Conestee, and to update citizens on the findings from the second round of assessment performed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("USEPA") through their contractor, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Charleston District. Everyone is invited to attend.

II. History of Site

Lake Conestee was created in 1835, when a dam was built on the Reedy River. The dam was replaced in 1926, resulting in an impoundment of approximately 145 acres. The lake is now 95% (by volume) silted-in. Lake Conestee is located in south-central Greenville County (South Carolina), near and adjacent to the unincorporated Town of Conestee. In 2000, the Conestee Foundation, a non-profit organization, purchased the site from Mr. H. J. Brand. The Conestee Foundation wishes to rehabilitate the lake by transforming it into a public greenspace, a managed wetlands complex, and an environmental teaching center.

On September 28, 2000, The Conestee Foundation entered into Voluntary Cleanup Contract 00-5393-NRP with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control ("SC DHEC") in order to obtain State Superfund liability protection for existing contamination under the State's Superfund law. Under this contract, the Foundation is responsible for environmental assessment at the Lake.

III. Actions Taken and Findings At The Site

The assessment was divided into two (2) phases, which were funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The first phase was performed through a Brownfield Targeted Site Assessment grant by SC DHEC. The results of this assessment were communicated to the Conestee community in a previous public meeting held on July 11, 2001. The results of the first phase of assessment indicated that lake sediments had been impacted by historical

industrial releases, likely originating from sources upstream. A second round of assessment was deemed necessary to adequately evaluate potential risks posed by contaminants detected on the property.

The second phase of assessment activities included the collection and analysis of environmental samples from areas not previously assessed including submerged sediments from Lake Conestee impounded areas and exposed sediments along the lake shoreline and interior uplands. Surface water quality was assessed under the changed conditions after repair of the dam, and fish tissue samples were collected and assessed.

Sediment and surface water in all areas of Lake Conestee contain detectable concentrations of many constituents typical of historical industrial discharges. Some of these chemicals include volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile organic compounds, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides and metals. Fish tissue samples contain detectable levels of pesticides and mercury. It is important to recognize that the levels of pollutants detected in Lake Conestee surface water and sediment pose no health concerns for the limited exposure expected through the normal use of Lake Conestee as a public greenspace and environmental teaching center. However, the levels detected in sediments indicate that extended exposure involving contact with Lake Conestee sediments should be avoided. For this reason, SC DHEC is recommending that the Conestee Foundation restrict public access to Lake Conestee.

As reported previously, in June 2001 the Lake Conestee dam was repaired to stop the loss of contaminated sediments from leaving the Lake and flowing downstream. This gate is a temporary solution, and the Army Corp of Engineers is currently evaluating other alternatives for a more permanent resolution. This repair will likely be performed over the next 18 months.

The Conestee Foundation, with oversight by SC DHEC, will continue to pursue additional studies that may be appropriate at Lake Conestee in order to better guide the future use and management of the lake. Already, the Foundation is working with several researchers from Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium, and Clemson University, to assess the effects of contaminants on wildlife. The Conestee Foundation is also very actively working with Greenville County, local municipalities, and other state, local and federal agencies to find resources to develop trails, park facilities, wildlife viewing areas, and a regional environmental studies facility on the properties owned by the Foundation.

IV. Questions or Comments

For additional information on this site or the public meeting, call Ms. Angela Gorman, DHEC's Project Manager, at (803) 896-4121 or the Appalachia II Environmental District Office at (864) 241-1090.